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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

FROM month to month the field of foreign politics becomes more contracted; war has visited almost every part of the Continent, from the frontiers of Russia to the Straits of Gibraltar. Denmark and Sweden, Prussia and Poland, Holland and Switzerland, Germany and Italy, have, in turn, been scorched with the flames, and what, at one time, threatened an universal conflagration upon the Continent, may be said to have gradually burnt out, and unless fresh fuel be administered, will probably be soon totally extinguished. Much the greater part of Europe enjoys a state of comparative and unusual tranquillity, and war is now confined to a southern peninsula, almost set apart from the rest of the Continent.

It is remarkable, that France and England, the two great hostile powers, have hitherto experienced least of the war in its immediate and most disastrous effects. They have both, by different means, employed their power and their policy to avert the conflict from their own, into other countries. Those countries have supplied the fields of battle, and in a great degree have suffered the consequences, whether as enemies to France, or auxiliaries of Britain. How much longer this policy of the contending powers can be pursued with the same success, is becoming every day more doubtful. After having battled it through the circuit of Europe, the question now is coming home, *where* the war which took its rise in France, is about to terminate?

Without giving any answer to this question, we should rather be inclined to assert, from the aspect of affairs abroad, and their natural influence on those at home, that every thing approximates gradually, though but slowly, to general peace, *necessary* peace. Endless war with all the world, appears to us nothing better than a re-publication of Don Quixote, with splendid additions, and the new idea of keeping a *floating* army on the coasts of Spain, ready to make predatory incursions upon different parts of the peninsula, much as the Danes, in former days, were accustomed to make on England and Ireland, such a mode of warfare will redound little to the interest, and less to the glory of Great Britain. Her character will, by such a splenetic invasion, be placed on a level with the Buccaniers of South America, in the opinion of Europe.

Our Retrospect of foreign politics for the present month is therefore happily abridged. Spain, and the American States are the chief, if not the only subjects of observation, for as to the victory at Vimiera, and the convention of Cintra, these visions of glory and of disgrace now begin to fade in the remembrance, and most people will join in thinking of the latter event, that the sooner it is forgotten, the better. Another convulsion has indeed taken place in the epileptic government of TURKEY, and Mustapha Bariactar, the grand Vizier, has been obliged to fly, along with the grand Signior himself, on board one of the Turkish fleet, for attempting to reform the military establishment. Such a reform, will probably never be effected, by such intestine revolutions. Turkey itself, must be subjected to a powerful conqueror from abroad, who may have the will and ability to crumble the Janissaries into their original dust; to break and disperse them into individual particles; to abolish their institution fully and finally, not by half measures, nor by forming and training before their faces, a rival institution, against which they vow vengeance, and in secret whet their sabres. Until a radical revolution take place, Constantinople will be doomed to see for ever, what it has seen, a hideous succession of headless Sultans, and a brute populace from time to time illumined only by the glare of periodical conflagrations. To those who refer, and justly refer, the happiness of nations to the salutary influence of wise and equitable government, combined with the mild fraternity of the Christian religion, it must afford pleasure to contrast the

convulsionary state of the Turkish empire, with the

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

"From Hudson's Bay (to make an appropriate quotation) from Hudson's Bay, with the small interruption of Canada, to the Missisippi, this immense continent beholds the religion of Jesus, unconnected with the patronage of government, subsisting in independent, yet friendly communities, breathing that universal charity which constitutes its vital spirit, and offering, with its distinct yet blending tones, one grand combination of harmony, to the ear of its heavenly father." Such is the aspect of these states with regard to religion, and as a *political* power, in despite of British parties, we must, in the impartiality of human nature declare, that it sustains its dignity, and sovereign independence, more decisively, and with more sublime self-denial, than any nation has done on the continent of Europe. In a most difficult, critical, and dangerous situation, they conduct the affairs of their government so as to make it respected, if not feared by the great hostile powers; and as every nation in Europe, by becoming a party in the contest, has renounced all mediation, we know not where impartial neutrality necessary to the character of mediator will be found upon the globe, unless it be sought for across the Atlantic, in the Congress of America.

Notwithstanding the mutual aggression of the belligerent powers upon their sovereignty, as well as their indisputable right to navigate the ocean; notwithstanding the capture of their vessels, the impressment of their seamen, and the maritime war carried on against them, *their* retaliation amounts only to the adoption of a preservative system, which may, at least, for a time avoid the evils of war, and consist with their independence; such a system, as secured them *at first*, the distinction of a sovereign nation. In consequence, they resolve that they cannot submit to the late edicts of Great Britain or France, without a sacrifice of their rights, honour, and independence; they prohibit all entrance into their ports of all vessels belonging to either of the hostile powers, and all importation of goods from any of their dominions; and they agree to take the most effectual and immediate measures for placing the country in a more complete state of defence. We feel a confidence that peace in Europe will supersede these preparatives of war, and that the wise, energetic, and consistent deportment of America will be most materially instrumental in the accomplishment of this truly glorious event. Glorious indeed, if the new world, so lately savage, would be able to mediate the peace of Europe, so long civilized, and in return for the evils suffered and suffering from the vindictive animosities of rival powers, would pour a pacific oil, upon the tossing of their turbulent passions; and smooth with the spirit of Christianity the agitations of their inordinate ambition.

SPAIN.

The city of Madrid surrendered on the 4th instant, to the French, under a humiliating capitulation, the whole of the regular army in garrison, being made prisoners of war, and the peasantry disarmed and dispersed to their respective villages. The actuating motive of Spanish resistance has been religious zeal, rather than public spirit. The sacred name of patriotism has been circulated from *mouth* to *mouth*. Juntas have pledged their lives and fortunes. Governors have sworn to bury themselves in the ruins of the places they had to defend. But, than all the reliques of their religion, better would it have been to have consecrated with appropriate zeal and fidelity, a single stone from the *ruins of Numantia*.

The whole city of Madrid, thirty thousand fathers of families, were on the 24th, rushing in crouds to the altars, where the *priests* are attending to administer the oath of fidelity to their *new* sovereign.

The autocrat of France has not lost a moment to follow up his military successes, by what may be called political victories. The inquisition annihilated; the system of alienating by donation or sale, the right of collecting the public revenues, abolished; the abolition of feudal rights, and manorial jurisdictions, peculiarly oppressive upon the people; the limitation of monasteries; the better main

tenance of active pastors; the act of amnesty, with few exceptions; all these may be considered as so many battles gained over the central junta, and which it has lost by its hesitation, its improvidence, or its selfishness. This central junta is now at Seville, in the southern extremity of Spain.

On the 22d, Bonaparte is said to have left Madrid to meet Sir John Moore, who had made a junction with the corps of Sir David Baird. This junction, however it might have been obstructed by the weather, or the bad condition of the roads, never seems to have met any hindrance on the part of the enemy, very probably with a view of drawing on the whole army further into the heart of Spain; from the defiles of Gallicia into the plains of Leon, or old Castile. After being stationary a considerable time (from 15th ult. to 16th inst.) which has not hitherto been well accounted for; Sir John advanced on the 16th from Toro to Carrion, in the way to Saldanha, with a view of attacking Soult, who was in that quarter, with about 16,000 men; but on hearing that he was reinforced, and by a letter from *Romana on his left*, that the French were advancing from Madrid, Sir J. Moore lost no time to secure his retreat. In all the partial skirmishes of the cavalry, the British, though inferior in numbers, appear to have been successful, and whether this was in consequence of the *Parthian* system, adopted often by the French, with a view of accomplishing their greater object, is hard to determine. Sir John Moore, it is said, had not many hours to lose in making good a retreat, without prosecuting the attempt upon Soult, which it is probable was a leading object; for surely his now professed one of making with an army of 40,000 men, a mere diversion in favour of the Spaniards in the south, *at a great risk*, as he acknowledges, to his own army, can scarcely be deemed an adequate reason for his forward movement; and how can that diversion be deemed "complete," which does not appear to have met with any correspondent movement in the south (30,000 French having been left at Madrid) while at the same time it exposed the British force if not to great disaster, at least to the consequences of a retreat, which must in itself always greatly dispirit, and in doing so, debilitate an army. Had he advanced farther, Sir John Moore would probably have had Buonaparte in his front, and Soult in his rear.

ENGLAND.

Parliament met on the 19th. They are informed in the King's Speech, delivered by commission, "that the only way of obtaining a safe and honourable peace, is by a vigorous prosecution of the war; that overtures of peace were rejected, of which a preliminary condition was the abandonment of Spain, with which country, in addition to the royal assurance of support, there has been formed a treaty of friendship and alliance, including the king of Sweden, and which only waits for *ratification;* that with a revenue continuing to flourish, the contest may be carried on without additional burthens, that the plan for a local militia has succeeded, and that steps are to be taken for the increase of the regular army."

And never surely in the history of Great Britain has there occurred a period in which there was a like dictatorial necessity "for the general council of ablest men, chosen by the people, to consult of public affairs, from time to time, for the public good." Never surely was it more necessary than at the present period, to establish through the medium of parliament, such a community of interest and reciprocity of obligation, between the government and the *whole* people, as may raise a barrier against that colossal power which threatens the extinction of all the ancient monarchies of Europe. This surely is not the time when any new watch-word will be raised, or any old one revived, that may effectually divide and distract the inhabitants of these countries, inclosed and beleaguered as they are like to be, in a circumvallation of European hostility. Will the cry of Jacibonism be again raised against those who assert that a vigorous prosecution of the war, has turned out a very round about road to the at-

tainment of peace; that it seems rather to have aggrandized the power of the enemy, and to have had a revolutionary effect in the different states of Europe, than to secure their permanence and establishment? Bonaparte is a strange conjunction of the jacobin and the despot.—But we are interrupted by the calamitous tidings of the day, which render us unwilling and unable to make at this time, further review of the past. All retrospect must give way to the force of the present impression. Let us make the pause of nature and sympathy....one of the finest armies that ever left the shores of Britain, with difficulty able to effectuate its retreat to Corunna; and during their march from the 26th ult. to the 11th inst. in continual skirmish with the enemy. A battle upon the 16th, in which their gallant general was killed, and the second in command most severely wounded: an embarkation immediately after, under every disadvantage, that must, under such circumstances, attend the evacuation of the country. Is the nation, after all these events, to acquiesce in the pious resignation of Mr. Canning, who is satisfied to assign them all to the Supreme Disposer, without any examination of secondary causes, which must have led to such a disastrous termination of the campaign. Our home defence must shortly be the sole object, and we trust that the great council of the nation will not be so dilatory as the Central Junta of Spain, in taking the most effectual measures for the safety and UNION of these countries. "Ne quid detrimenti respublica capiat."

IRELAND.

Twelve capital convictions at Limerick, and the arrival of Sir Arthur Wellesley at *Holy-head*, forms the summary of Irish history for the last month, and for such occurrences we know not whether to condole with, or to congratulate our country.

We gladly take this occasion of acknowledging an error we were led into in our last retrospect, by quoting an extract from an address to the king, as having come from the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster. That body, we are since assured, "did not address the king last year, nor have they at any time addressed his Majesty in the language imputed to them." We were led into the error by having copied the extract alluded to, from a respectable newspaper of this place, in which it had been published on the 5th of December, and although re-published in several other papers, remained without contradiction or disavowal, until the 23d January. We were therefore led to believe the document authentic, and we fell in with the general deception on the subject. We are happy that such public disavowal has taken place, because even tacit acquiescence might be liable to misinterpretation, and because, from *whatever body* the address did come, there is now no danger of that body being confounded, either by inattention or design, on *either* side of the water, with the SYNOD of ULSTER.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

ORDER IN COUNCIL.

His Majesty, in virtue of the powers reserved to him by two certain Acts, passed in the 48th year of his Majesty's Reign, the one intituled "An Act for granting to his Majesty, until the end of the next Session of Parliament, Duties of Customs on the Goods, Wares and Merchandises therein enumerated, in furtherance of the provisions of certain Orders in Council;" the other intituled, "An Act for granting to his Majesty, until the end of the next Session of Parliament, certain Duties on the Exportation from Ireland of Goods, Wares, and Merchandises therein enumerated;" is pleased by and with the advice of his Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that, until further Orders shall be made herein, the operation of the aforesaid Acts be suspended as to any Duties on Exportation granted by the said Acts, so far as relates to Articles being the growth, produce, or manufacture of any country for the time being in amity with his Majesty, and from the ports of which the British flag is not excluded, which Articles have been or shall be imported direct from such Country into any port or place of the United Kingdom, either in British ships, or in ships of the country of which such articles are the growth, produce, or manufacture.

And his Majesty is further pleased, with the advice aforesaid, to order, and